

Did Trump Really Call Putin Late Last Week?

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

There are reasons to doubt WaPo's report.

The [Washington Post's](#) (WaPo) report alleging that Trump called Putin the Thursday after he won the election and told him not to escalate the conflict was contradicted by both the Kremlin and Kiev. The first called it "[pure fiction](#)" while the second said that it was "[unaware](#)" of the call despite allegedly being informed of it. The Trump team hasn't commented on it at the time of writing. Nevertheless, the report's timeframe raises questions about its credibility, which will now be elaborated on.

EXCLUSIVE

Trump talked to Putin, told Russian leader not to escalate in Ukraine

President-elect Donald Trump spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday and discussed the war in Ukraine, according to people familiar with the call.

🔒 7 min ↻ 📌 🗑

Screenshot from [WaPo](#)

Putin participated in his traditional Q&A session that evening at the Valdai Club's annual meeting, which lasted [until around midnight](#). **He claimed not to have talked to Trump by that time but said that he'd be interested in speaking with him if he calls.** If WaPo's report is correct, then it means that Putin either talked to Trump before the aforesaid event but lied about it or that he talked to him sometime afterwards but before 8am Moscow time, which would be midnight of the next day at Mar-a-Lago.

It can only be speculated why Putin would lie about this if that's indeed what happened, which is unlikely, and it's also equally unlikely that he'd agree to have a detailed discussion with Trump between midnight and 8am in the morning after the prior evening's long Q&A session. After all, these sorts of calls aren't impromptu but are arranged ahead of time, and Putin could always have rescheduled. Therefore, WaPo's report is probably fake news, thus making one wonder why it was published in the first place.

One possibility is that someone on his team was tasked with introducing the report's two

narratives, that Trump told Putin not to escalate but also informed Ukraine of the call too, into the discourse. This could have been done to test the water by gauging their reactions to what he might have planned to do. Another possibility is that subversive elements close to him wanted to undermine his planned call. And finally, the last possibility is that it was made up, whether by WaPo or whoever else for whatever reason.

In the order that they were shared, the first “trial run” theory would have shown that Russia is uncomfortable with being told what to do while Ukraine doesn’t want to be left out of the loop. As for the second, both might now know what to expect, but Trump could also switch it up to surprise them. Regarding the last one, it drove traffic to WaPo’s site and reaffirmed the perception of them as one of the preferred outlets for insiders to leak to, but it had no noticeable effect beyond that.

Looking forward, the first official Putin-Trump call (whenever it may be and assuming that WaPo’s report is fake news as was argued) will probably see the returning American leader sharing more details with his Russian counterpart about exactly what he has in mind for ending the Ukrainian Conflict. Readers can learn more about what that might look like [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). It’ll take more than one call to achieve this, most likely at least one in-person meeting too, but everything is moving in that direction.

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